



**Minutes
King County Rural Forest Commission
May 16, 2007
Preston Community Center, Preston, Washington**

Commissioners present: Julie Stangell, Kevin Buckley, Lee Witter Kahn and Ron Baum

Commissioners absent: Doug Schindler, Leonard Guss, Alex Kamola, Jim Franzel and Doug McClelland

Ex officio member present: Brandy Reed, Randy Sandin and Amy Grotta

Ex officio members absent: Marilyn Cope

Staff: Harry Reinert, Department of Development and Environmental Services; Paul Reitenbach, Department of Development and Environmental Services; Kathy Creahan, Farm and Forest Programs Manager and Linda Vane, Liaison for the Rural Forest Commission

Guests: Doug Schrenk, USDA Forest Service and Matt Rourke, International Forestry Consultants

Meeting Summary

Action Items:

1. Rural Forest Commission (RFC) members are invited to visit the website at <http://www.metrokc.gov/shorelines/default.aspx> and provide comment for the Shoreline Master Program Update by July 6th or email to staff.
2. The RFC is invited to send any additional Comp Plan Update recommendations to Kathy Creahan before the July 18 RFC meeting.
3. RFC members will test the WSU Extension bulletin board for forest services and contact Amy Grotta with comments. The web address was emailed to members.
4. The Executive Committee will consider a proposal that the RFC co-sponsor a Farms and Forests Field Trip.

Minutes:

Motion 5-1-07 That the minutes from the March 21, 2007 meeting be approved with the following corrections: on page 2 "Harrison" is changed to read "Erickson." The motion was moved, seconded and approved.

Julie Stangell called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Report on the Shoreline Master Program Update

Harry Reinert, Special Projects Manager, King County DDES

Harry reported on the progress of the County's state-mandated Shoreline Master Program Update. He said that the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) is required to show that the County will improve shorelines that are degraded. In updating the SMP the County must do an analysis of the cumulative impacts of improvements and demonstrate that implementation of the plan will

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add overall function in a given watershed. In terms of forestry, a goal is to apply consistent standards, whether the forest practice takes place within an area regulated by the SMP or outside.

Harry reviewed the seven shoreline designations to be used in the SMP Update, which represent different levels of alteration on shorelines (see Attachment 1). These range from highly developed industrial and commercial shoreline environments to “natural shoreline environments” that are minimally degraded. Some of the designations differ from the current SMP. For forest practices, Harry said the County will continue to defer to the state Forest Practice Rules. In industrial and urban residential zones, forestry will not be allowed. Kathy asked if forestry would still be allowed in areas that are defined as “Natural Areas” under the new designation names. She said that forest practices have been allowed in the natural category in the current plan because lands in that category might require forest management for safety or forest health. Harry said that his team will look again at the Natural Area designation to make sure the County can allow forest practices for forest health, but preclude large scale logging.

Harry explained that the term “shorelines of statewide significance” has a different meaning than shorelines in general. The SMP deals only with shorelines of statewide significance. He said that the County plans to shape rules so that operators do not have to do shoreline conditional use permits for forestry unless the land is being converted to another land use. However, said Harry, this is difficult if a shoreline is of statewide significance. Lee said that King County needs to be able to explain standards clearly or they will “get hammered” by the public. Kathy asked if the proposed SMP update means that the letter of exemption for forest practices within 200 feet of a shoreline is not needed [an issue discussed at length at the March RFC meeting]. Harry said the County is working on streamlining the process. *[Editor’s note: State law requires a specific permitting process if a forest practice within 200 feet of the shoreline will involve something other than selective timber cutting.]*

Ron asked if the SMP Update will consider the effects of improvements in other locations. Harry said that the program overall is supposed to result in no net loss and even result in improvement within a basin as a whole. Ron said that in the case of forest land there is no status quo; it only improves over time. He asked if the County has considered that in looking at watersheds. Harry said he does not know how that is factored in and offered that it would be worth looking at the restoration plan to see if that is one of the factors they took into account.

In conclusion Harry said that an initial draft SMP Update, excluding ordinances, will be released soon for public comment. A second draft of the policy document and more fully developed draft regulations will be released in fall 2007 and the RFC will be asked to review and comment on the draft. The Shoreline Master Program website is located at:

<http://www.metrokc.gov/shorelines/default.aspx> and the review draft is available at <http://www.metrokc.gov/shorelines/shoreline-master-program-plan.aspx>. *[Editor’s note: The public comment period ends July 6, 2007.]*

Action: Rural Forest Commission members are invited to visit the website and comment on the initial draft SMP Update.

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King County Comprehensive Plan Update

Paul Reitenbach, Manager for the Comprehensive Plan Update, King County Department of Development and Environmental Services

Paul reported on the Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) update process and emerging issues from the King County Comp Plan staff. County Council approved the project scope of work including a list of “topical areas” to be considered through the update process. [Read the list of topical areas and the project timeline at <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/compplan/2008/index.htm>.] Knowledgeable staff in County departments will coordinate policy development in the various topical areas. Issues related to rural legacy and natural resource lands topics are mostly being handled by staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. Paul said that the State Legislature did not adopt the “rural village” legislation, so although “rural villages” are on the list as a potential topic, King County will not deal with it in the update process.

Kathy handed out new drafts of sections that deal with forests and forestry. The new draft language incorporates RFC recommendations from the March meeting and any comments received since March from commissioners. For example, the new draft incorporates Len’s comment that the term “forest industries” is incorrect because King County no longer has any true forest industries. The new draft also includes corrections of out of date or redundant statements. Kathy walked the group through the proposed changes and pointed out sections that she has not edited but may deserve review by the RFC.

Amy Grotta asked that the term “WSU Cooperative Extension” be corrected to read “WSU King County Extension.” Amy also asked if there is 20-acre zoning, citing policy R-110, which says that properties in the Rural Forest Focus Areas (RFFA) should be maintained in parcels of 20 acres or more. Kathy explained that there is no regulation that requires 20-acre density, but rather that the County has incentive programs to encourage landowners to keep large forested parcels intact. Kathy said the incentives include selling of development rights, or transfer of development rights (TDR). There is a preponderance of 20-acre or larger parcels at this time in the RFFAs, but that could change as the zoning is mostly 5 to 10 acres per parcel. Kathy said that there were citizens who felt that the county did not designate enough land in the Forest Zone in 1994. The concept of the RFFA identified those areas that people were concerned about and the County uses an incentive approach to deter subdivision of parcels and development. From time to time 20-acre zoning has been proposed, but the idea has not gone anywhere, said Kathy.

Paul said the County’s TDR program has had its best success in transferring development credits from rural areas to urban areas. He said the County has a rural to rural transfer program, but it has not been used very much. The County is trying to find ways to make the rural to rural transfer program more viable, according to Paul. One way would be to send growth to the rural cities to make it more attractive, said Paul. He said there have not been many cities that want to be receiving areas for county development credits, however. The reasons are that some of the more progressive cities have their own in-city transfers of development credits, so they see no need for the transferring credits in from rural areas. Other cities have determined that they will achieve their growth targets easily and have no need of programs that promote faster growth.

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Kathy added that urban residents understand that their communities have agreed to accept a certain level of density and are reluctant to take more density in their own communities to save unincorporated area forests.

Lee asked if the TDR Program is expanding. Kathy said yes, but slowly because of difficulty in finding receiving sites for development credits.

Ron suggested that the County devise a new incentive approach that would give regulatory relief in exchange for accepting density. Paul said that the County had a similar idea with its 4 to 1 Program, where at least twenty acres of rural land, when adjacent to the urban growth boundary, would take dense development if 80% of the land were dedicated as open space. The remaining 20% of the property could be dense, urban development. Paul said that implementation proved to be cumbersome and the program has not been used much. The program expired at the end of 2006. His department hopes to find more workable ways to concede some development on the edge of the urban growth boundary and get more open space protected in forested areas.

With regard to Chapter 5 - Resource Lands, policy R-510, Kathy asked the RFC to consider if it is worthwhile to have a broadly-worded policy encouraging public appreciation for resource lands activities. Several commissioners said there is no benefit to posting Forest Production District or Rural Forest Focus Area signs on private property as stated in the text, but the general concept of raising public awareness of the special districts and forestry was acceptable. Kathy asked that commissioners send her specific recommendations if they have any.

Kathy reviewed a new section introducing policy R-519 to reflect recommendations from RFC members. Kathy drafted language to acknowledge that there are no more major mills in King County and to propose that (a) the County should adopt policies to work with other counties to encourage retention of log processing facilities in the region and that (b) the County should encourage the retention of small mills that serve small forest landowners in the county.

Ron asked Kathy to report back to the RFC if she observes shared concerns between the King County Agriculture Commission and the RFC. Kathy said that the County has a *Climate Change Plan* and that they intend reflect it throughout the Comp Plan Update. She said there is likely to be language added to Comp Plan about the effects of climate change on trees. [See <http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/news/2007/0207warming.aspx>.]

Paul thanked the RFC for their work the progress made in this first set of draft amendments. Kathy asked that RFC members continue to send her comments and recommendations for the Comp Plan Update and she will develop a revised set of amendments for the July RFC meeting. The RFC's recommendations must be completed by August 1, 2007. Paul said that he would like to be able to report to the County Executive that the RFC and County staff with appropriate expertise have produced mutually acceptable recommendations.

Action: The RFC is invited to send any additional Comp Plan Update recommendations to Kathy Creahan before the July 18 RFC meeting.

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Update on online bulletin board for forest land owners and service providers

Amy Grotta, Forestry Educator, WSU King County Extension

Amy reported on an electronic bulletin board under development to help make forest management more feasible for small landowners. Forested parcels have become so small that it is hard for landowners to actually make money on timber harvest, thinning or other forest practices, explained Amy. Rural Forest commissioners suggested the bulletin board last year as a way to encourage landowners to do cooperative harvests. The intention is to help people find other small forest landowners to hire one operator to come out at the same time, making the job more attractive to operators. Amy encouraged RFC members to test site and give her comments.

Action: RFC members will try the electronic forestry services bulletin board and give feedback.

Staff Reports

Randy Sandin, Department of Development and Environmental Services

Randy updated the RFC on the passage of State Senate Bill 2SSB-5883, concerning conversion of forest land to non-forestry uses. The bill, which was discussed at the March RFC meeting, has been passed. Randy explained that the bill affects how Forest Practice moratoriums are implemented. He said that under the old regulations, when an application for a state Class II, III or IV-Special forest practice permit is approved, a 6-year moratorium on building permits or subdivision is automatically applied to the property. With the recent change, the moratorium does not yet exist when one applies for a Class II, III or IV-Special permit. The Forest Practice application is on record, but the moratorium does not come into play until the landowner decides to develop. At that time the local government has to notify Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) that they have received an application to convert, explained Randy. WDNR then has to issue Notice of Intent to Convert to the Department of Ecology and the local jurisdiction. That is the notification that the moratorium has come into play and the landowner has to apply for moratorium relief in order to build or subdivide. [Read about forest practice permits at <http://www.metrokc.gov/permits/info/site/forest.aspx>.]

Randy said that the main things that have changed with the new regulation are the relationship with WDNR and the process, not development rules or forest practices. Randy said that under the current system, the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) makes a note in their electronic tracking system when it is notified by WDNR that a Forest Practice permit application has been filed. The notation does go on the property title, said Randy, but it just sits in the permit system database until someone comes in to apply for a building permit. Under the new rules the flag will not go on the title, but there will still be a record in DDES's tracking system. Randy said the principle effects may be that the flag on title is no longer there for future purchasers. This does not apply to the Forest Production District because DDES believes the chances of that land being converted to non-forestry land uses is low.

Until DDES updates code the current practice will remain, said Randy. The new state regulations will guide how King County changes code in the future. Randy said that the 6-year

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moratorium is a state requirement administered by WDNR. There will still be a moratorium and landowners will still have to apply for relief in order to convert land use to something other than forest production, said Randy.

Lee said that about a year ago the RFC proposed that the County lower the cost of certain forest practice permits, to bring them more in line with cost of WDNR permits. Randy replied that such a change was proposed by the RFC and will be considered when DDES does a comprehensive fee ordinance revision in 2008. Lee asked for reassurance that this will not fall between the cracks. Randy said that he did not think that it will. Kathy said the RFC concerns were also about the efficiency of the process for permits. Randy said that part of the problem is that state permits are subsidized and thus are not accountable for the time needed to process them. The only way for the County to lower the cost of permits is to subsidize them as was done to lower the cost of certain agricultural permits. Linda commented that DDES has already made changes to lower the cost of certain permits, like accepting the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) permit. Randy said that DDES is always looking at how to streamline processes. DDES structures fees on a three-year cycle in order to try to set the rate to that over 3 years will have a balanced budget, continued Randy. DDES has not updated fees for 4 years so already are losing money, according to him.

Matt Rourke asked if Forest Management Plans (aka Forest Stewardship Plans) will still play a role in what can be built? Randy said that will not change for the time being. Randy said that the Forest Management Plan with an excluded area, used in combination with the WDNR Forest Practices permit, seems to be working well. DDES has had very few who ask for relief from the moratorium, said Randy.

Amy Grotta, WSU Extension Forestry Educator

Amy said that WSU Extension and King County will offer the "Managing Your Timber Sale" workshop in Duvall on June 30. The workshop will educate small forest landowners about timber sales as a means of encouraging landowners to implement their Forest Management Plans. Amy also reported that the Summer Youth Forestry Institute on Taylor Mountain Forest will begin in July. High School students will be setting up long term monitoring plots and doing some monitoring under a grant funded by King County through the Natural Resource Stewardship Network [<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grant-exchange/NRSN.htm>].

Linda Vane, Liaison for the RFC

Linda reported that WDNR has published *Forest Practices Illustrated*, a simplified guide to Forest Practice Rules. Linda said that there are a limited number of printed versions, but it is widely available in DVD and can be downloaded from the WDNR web page [<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/forestpractices/illustrated/>].

Linda distributed information about reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Congress is considering a one-year extension. The County Executive and the County Council endorsed reauthorization and full funding of the Act upon the recommendation of the RFC last year.

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Linda reported that the Forestry Program has exceeded its 10-year goal for landowner participation in its programs. Between 1996 and 2006, the owners of 11,584 acres of privately-owned forestlands participated in the coached forest management classes, used forestry technical assistance and/or completed forest management plans. The target was 8,700 acres of an estimated 87,000 acres of privately-owned non-industrial forest in the Rural Forest Focus Areas, Vashon Island and the Forest Production District. Linda reminded the commissioners that WSU Extension's 2006 survey showed that 70% of the people who complete the coached forest management classes implement some kind of forest practice on their land. These practices may be as simple as tree planting or as complex as a timber sale, said Linda. King County encourages active forest management as a means of reducing conversion of forestland to other uses, to improve forest health, sustain rural economic activities and to reduce risks from wildfire.

Linda asked the RFC to consider cosponsoring a Farm and Forests Field Trip with the Agriculture Commission. The field trip would invite leaders from urban non-profit organizations to discuss challenges facing working farms and forests with the landowners themselves.

Action: The Executive Committee will consider the proposal and make a decision.

Suggestions for future agendas

1. King County 2007 climate change plan
2. Comments on the Comp Plan Update
3. University of Washington's "Future of Washington Forests" report
4. DDES decision-making processes

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Next meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, July 18, 2007, in Preston.

Staff Liaison:

Linda Vane, Forestry Program

206-296-8042 or linda.vane@metrokc.gov



King County

Ron Sims

King County Executive

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

Department of Development and Environmental Services

**King County Shoreline Master Program Update
May 2007**

Shoreline Master Program Elements

- Shoreline Master Plan
 - Policies
 - Public Access Plan
 - Restoration Plan
 - Cumulative Impact Analysis
 - Technical Appendix
- Shoreline Regulations
- Maps

Shoreline Designations

- **High Intensity Shoreline Environment:** Applied to areas that provide high-intensity water-oriented commercial, transportation, and industrial uses.
- **Shoreline Residential Environment:** Applied to accommodate residential uses at urban densities, while allowing for non-residential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline.
- **Rural Shoreline Environment:** Applied to accommodate rural residential shoreline development, while allowing for rural non-residential uses that are consistent with the protection of the shoreline.
- **Conservancy Shoreline Environment:** Applied to protect and conserve the shoreline for ecological, public safety, recreation, agriculture, and mineral resource purposes. Includes areas with important ecological processes and functions, valuable historic and cultural features, flood and geological hazards, agriculture and mineral resource lands, and recreational opportunities.
- **Natural Resource Shoreline Environment:** Applied to areas to allow for forestry and protect municipal water supplies.
- **Natural Shoreline Environment:** Applied to shorelines that are relatively intact or have minimally degraded shoreline functions that are intolerant of human use.
- **Aquatic Environment:** Applied to the areas waterward of the ordinary high water mark.

Forest Practices

Clearing and Grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply K.C.C. Chapter 16.82 without modification, except for forest practices
Forest Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not allowed in the High Intensity, Shoreline Residential, or Natural Environments• Within shorelines of the state, comply with WaDNR Forest Practice Rules• Within shorelines of statewide significance<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Only selective commercial timber cutting for timber harvest within two hundred feet of the ordinary high water mark○ No more than thirty percent of the merchantable tress may be harvested in any ten year period of time.○ Requires a shoreline conditional use permit if:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Will involve other timber harvesting methods in those limited instances where selective logging would be ecologically detrimental; and▪ Clear cutting of timber that is solely incidental to the preparation of land for other uses authorized by the King County Shoreline Master Program.

Shoreline Master Program Update timeline

June 22 – Public comment period ends on draft program proposals

Fall 2007 – Revised draft regulations package will be submitted to the public for review and comments

March 2008 – King County Executive will transmit a proposed Shoreline Master Program Update to the Metropolitan King County Council for review, public hearings and adoption

Shoreline Master Program Update public meetings schedule

June 5 – Carnation

June 6 – Auburn

June 7 – Vashon